

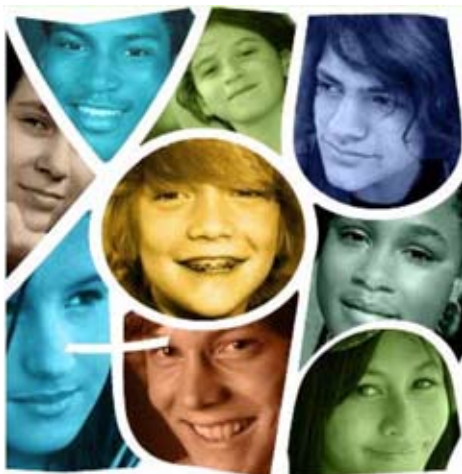
Caregiver Connection

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A monthly publication for Washington state foster and adoptive families and relative caregivers

Foster parents play an important role in education

Scott Hanauer, Clinical Director at Community Youth Services, gives foster parents advice on advocating for their youth's success in school



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What should foster parents do to advocate for their foster children at their school?

- When you visit the school for the first time, encourage the social worker to go with you and set up an appointment with the principal and teacher. Find out about your child's education and school experience so far. If this is a new school for your child, you can set up a meeting during enrollment.
- If your child has a disability, you need to contact the social worker and school to create an Individualized Education Program or view your child's current IEP.
- Be proactive instead of reactive. Contact the school and teacher while your child is succeeding and keep in communication with them often. Be involved while your child is doing well.
- As a foster parent you can become an "expert" on your foster children and use that information to educate the school and teachers. Teachers are not trained on how to work with foster kids and are not always sure what to do. For example, teachers are trained to provide stimulus that most kids find enriching. Traumatized kids may find decorations and constant stimuli to be overwhelming.

Do foster parents have different rights than biological parents in regards to working with teachers or school administrators?

Yes and no. They do have many of the same rights and responsibilities as biological parents and can play a major part of their child's education. However, there are instances where the social worker may have to be involved and sign the appropriate paperwork as the "legal guardian" of the foster child.

As a foster parent, how can you help your foster student succeed in school? What kinds of programs are offered to help?

Contact your social worker and local school to ask what local programs and resources can be of assistance.

1624 Statewide Regional Foster Parent Representatives

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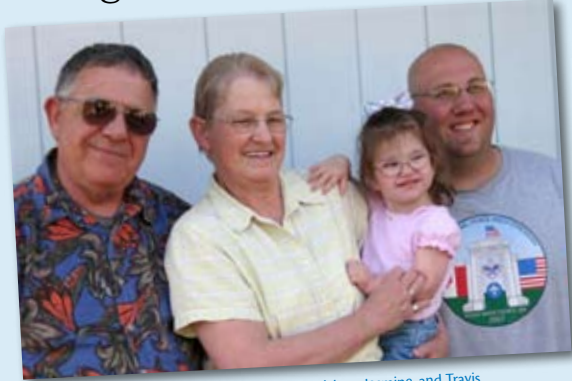
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You gotta have heart!



LEFT TO RIGHT: The "at-home" Nollettes – Paul, Jean, Jasmine, and Travis

Jean Nollette sits patiently in the waiting area of Children's Hospital responding to interview questions on her cell phone. She is there for three days with her medically fragile two year old foster-adopt baby who is having a procedure critical to surviving her disabilities. "At least I'm getting more sleep while I'm here," she says.

Back home in Port Townsend is husband, Paul, and two foster babies, ages 5 months and 10 months. Her youngest adopted son is there too. At age 28, he lives a fairly independent life, but still needs support to cope with his FAS.

This is one energetic lady! She and Paul have been foster parents for twenty years. Jean is a nurse, and back in 1984, they decided to add a special needs child to their family of four birth children. They ended up adopting a sibling group of three! It was after that that they decided they still had something to give and they began fostering babies with special needs. Over the years they have fostered about seventy children.

As a family they like to go camping and spend time together. The best times are those spent with her now very large family. Jean emphasizes, "Everything we do, we do as a family." The biggest recent event was when everyone was together to celebrate Jean and Paul's 40th wedding anniversary. Congratulations, Jean and Paul!

Jean's commitment to these special babies is clear as she talks about them. She acknowledges that it is not easy and you won't get rich, but "whatever you do will make an impression." She is happiest being a voice for babies who don't have a voice of their own. She believes that most people become foster parents because they want to give back. Her advice is to be prepared for a lot of work! Jean knows about that – hard work is her middle name! But Jean and Paul are experts at that work and do it with their miles and miles and miles of heart.

You can too.

Budget cuts won't axe program for college bound youth in care

Good news! The Foster Care to 21 program, a program providing support to foster youth seeking education beyond high school, is continuing. New Federal legislation will enable Children's Administration to continue serving youth in the program and accept some new applications! Make sure that youth in your home know about this valuable opportunity.

What is Foster Care to 21?

A program that allows youth to remain in foster care, after they graduate from high school or obtain their GED, until age 21, so they can pursue post-secondary education (college or vocational program). The program provides:

- foster care placement
- medical coverage
- other agreed upon support services

Who is Eligible?

- Youth who are at least 18 and have graduated from high school or obtained their GED
- Youth who have applied to a post secondary institution
- Young people who apply within 6 months after leaving foster care

How to Apply

- Current and former foster youth need to complete the Foster Care to 21 Program application and release of information
- For more information, contact the Foster Care to 21 program manager: email PRJ1300@dshs.wa.gov or call 360-902-8487

Please help support our youth while they pursue their dreams and improve their futures. Foster parents will receive the basic foster care reimbursement rate for those youth in the program remaining in their home.

There's a new card in town

Those familiar with the Department of Social and Health Services' Medical Assistance ID card can say good-bye to the old and welcome in the new. The MAID – also called a medical coupon – is being replaced by a permanent, plastic client Services Card.

The Services Card is the most visible change coming with ProviderOne, DSHS's new provider payment system.

- Each person eligible for services will have a card – not just one for the family.
- Clients should keep their Services Card. Even when a client isn't eligible for DSHS services, he or she should hold on to the card. It can be reactivated if they become eligible for services again in the future.
- Services Cards will be issued from a central location – not from local DSHS offices.
- The Services Card has a magnetic strip that providers may use to access or verify eligibility information. This means there's no private health information on the card.

Clients, providers, community partners, and DSHS staff will get more details about the Services Card as we get closer to implementation, which is scheduled for December 2009.

In the meantime, visit the ProviderOne Web site for more information: <http://hrsa.dshs.wa.gov/providerone/clients.htm>.



What are some options for foster parents with children who have behavior problems in school?

Attending trainings that focus on de-escalation techniques can be helpful, and then share those ideas with your school and child's teacher. Children who are misbehaving in school do not always fall under the same rules as other students. If your child has an IEP, it may state what actions will be taken depending on the behaviors of the child. Study intervention techniques that will help your foster student make positive choices before there is a problem. You can build a behavior management plan with your child's school.

What are some of the difficulties for foster students?

There is an achievement gap between foster students and their peers who aren't in foster care. Foster children are encouraged to bridge that gap and "catch up". By age 13 these children feel overwhelmed by the gap in their education. They start thinking of dropping out because the idea of catching up is too stressful and demoralizing. 61% of foster youth do not graduate.

Foster parents should provide time, space and support with homework. They should not force their children to spend an excessive amount of time on remedial work at

home. This may have a negative impact both on their relationship and the child's feelings towards school. Don't focus on closing the gap. Focus on developing the educational skills for the youth to be successful on his own.

You will have to advocate for your child as a student. Very positive results come from foster parents and school staff work collaboratively.

What does a success story look like?

We had a teenage girl who had been moved many times from foster home to foster home with little success. Her education was suffering. Her foster family kept faith in her progress and agreed to have her volunteer to work with young children. She never showed behavior problems in this setting. As she began to see herself being successful she started working as a camp counselor and has decided that graduating high school is her goal so that she can go on to college and become a teacher.

Involving foster children in pro-social activities such as sports, clubs and volunteer work can help them do better in school. It also allows the child to feel needed and important, which helps build positive self esteem. This makes their educational experience more positive and motivating.

Post Adoption **Support**

Changing the Social Security Card for your adopted child

Newly adopted children have an existing social security card in their birth name. If you want to change your child's legal name after the adoption, you must let Social Security know so they can issue a new card with your child's new name. This will allow you to show the child's new name for school, employment, for your tax records and other circumstances where identification is required.

When applying to change the name on your child's card, the Social Security office will ask for a certified copy of the adoption decree plus two other original documents that identify your child:

- A document identifying your child by his/her old name. It doesn't matter if this document has expired; and
- A document identifying your child by his/her new legal name. This document must be current (unexpired).

Both of these documents must show identifying information or a recent photograph.

The new card will have the same number as the previous card, but will show the child's new name. Social Security will mail the number and card as soon as they have all of the information and have verified the documents.

For more information on the requirements to change your adopted child's Social Security card, call or visit your local Social Security office or go online to www.socialsecurity.gov. The information above was taken from that website.

Have you met the Listserv?

One of the ways the Children's Administration gets information to foster parents and other caregivers is through the foster parent listserv. In addition to your monthly Caregiver Connection, we are using the listserv as a means to get news to you quickly and efficiently. We will be using it more and more. If you haven't joined, log on to <http://listserv.wa.gov> to complete the task today! See you on the listserv!

Kinship Care Providers – Did you know?

Relatives providing care for a child may not require licensure as a foster home; however, many relatives voluntarily complete licensing requirements because of the additional resources and supports available. Regardless of licensing status, anyone planning to adopt related children placed in their home must complete foster care Pre-Service Training before the adoption can be completed. Leaving this to the last minute could result in the adoption being delayed or traveling a longer distance to find the training.

Remember, relatives – you must complete foster care pre-service training in order to adopt the children in your home! Even if you are not licensed or do not plan to become licensed as a foster home, this is a requirement.

Resources for foster parents available through OSPI

Education Advocacy Guide for Caregivers

What parents need to know about working with schools from early learning to beyond high school, including enrollment, discipline, Special Education, and more.

Make a Difference in a Child's Life

A Manual for Helping Children and Youth Get What They Need in School.

What every parent needs to know

A series of four handbooks for parents and caregivers with children in elementary and secondary public schools in Washington state.

Casey Family Programs provides publications to improve educational success of foster children.

Important numbers to know when you take care of children in out-of-home care

Foster Parent and Caregiver Crisis and Support Line: 1-800-301-1868

ON-GOING AND CRISIS SUPPORTS FOR FOSTER PARENTS

Under contracts with the state, three private agencies are working to build supports for you within the foster care community. Supports include hubs, support groups, and matching new foster parents with veteran foster parents. To get connected:

- If you live in Eastern Washington, the Olympic Peninsula down through Pacific County or from Thurston County to Clark County, call 1-888-794-1794.
- If you live in King County, call 206-605-0664 and in any county from Snohomish County north, call 360-510-7601 or 360-863-6530.
- If you live in Pierce or Kitsap counties, call 253-473-9252.
- If you live in King County, the Friends of Youth CARE program provides short-term counseling, education and support to help you care for your most difficult children. 1-888-263-3457 or 206-915-0459.

Family Help Line: 1-800-932-HOPE or www.parenttrust.org. The Family Help Line is a free, statewide training and referral line for the families of Washington state. Last year, the Family Help Line received more than 5,000 calls and requests for information. Calls can last up to 90 minutes and parents can call as often as needed.

Support for foster parents under investigation for allegations of abuse or neglect: Foster Parent Investigation Retention Support Team (FIRST) 253-219-6782. Monday through Saturday, 8:00 a.m. – 8:00 p.m., or leave a message and receive a return call within 24 hours.

Foster Parent and Caregiver Crisis and Support Line: 1-800-301-1868

Mental Health Crisis Line Information: The crisis line telephone number for your county or region is available on the DSHS Mental Health Division website at: <http://www.dshs.wa.gov/mentalhealth/crisis.shtml>.

GENERAL FOSTER PARENT INFORMATION FOR THE STATE OF WASHINGTON

FPAWS: Foster Parent Association of Washington State, 1-800-391-CARE (2273) or www.fpaws.org. FPAWS is seeking new members and supporting foster parents in many ways, including referrals to local associations.

Kitsap and Pierce County information about becoming a foster parent or to receive foster parent support: Foster Care Resource Network, 253-473-9252. Monday through Friday, 9:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m. or leave a message and receive a return call by the next business day.

RESOURCE INFORMATION AVAILABLE STATEWIDE

Get connected to information on resources in your area by calling 211 – a toll free number.

Children's Administration Foster Parent Website:
<http://www.dshs.wa.gov/ca/fosterparents/>

Children's Administration Foster Parent Training Website – Trainings are open to all licensed foster parents, licensed relative caregivers and unlicensed caregivers. For information about foster parent and caregiver training, check out:
<http://www.dshs.wa.gov/ca/fosterparents/training.asp>

CHILDREN'S ADMINISTRATION FOSTER CARE LISTSERV

Join the 400 people who have subscribed to the List Serve
<http://listserv.wa.gov/cgi-bin/wa?SUBED1=fosterparents&&A=1> for updated information on resources for the work you do in caring for children.

Family Planning Services are designed to help avoid unwanted or mistimed pregnancy and are available through your local Community Service Office (CSO). Each CSO has a full time Family Planning Nurse to help provide services to Medicaid eligible clients. There is also a Family Planning hotline number 1-800-770-4334.

The Early Periodic, Screening, Diagnosis and Treatment

The Early Periodic, Screening, Diagnosis and Treatment (EPSDT) program in the state of Washington pays for annual Well-Child examinations for the child/youth placed in your care. The purpose of the EPSDT is to prevent and identify conditions that may interfere with a child/youth's natural growth and development. The EPSDT also covers the diagnosis and treatment services for serious and reoccurring physical and mental health conditions. The EPSDT examination should include:

- A complete physical examination
- A current health/developmental history
- Appropriate vision and hearing tests
- Developmental and nutritional assessment
- Substance abuse screening
- An oral health assessment and referral for dental care for children 1 year of age and older
- Appropriate lab tests
- Health education and counseling
- Immunizations

When does my child/youth need an EPSDT?

Children in out-of-home care must have EPSDT examinations according to the schedule below:

- One examination within 30 days of entering any out-of-home placement
- Five examinations between 0 and 12 months of age:
 - First: 1 month
 - Second: 2 to 3 months
 - Third: 4 to 5 months
 - Fourth: 6 to 8 months
 - Fifth: 9 to 11 months
- Three examinations between 1 and 2 years of life:
 - First: 12 months
 - Second: 15 months
 - Third: 18 months
- One examination EVERY year between 3 and 20 years of age

It is extremely important that the child/youth in your care receives an EPSDT examination as outlined in this schedule. EPSDT examinations ensure the continued overall health of the child/youth. Children and youth in out-of-home placement may go to the doctor whenever there is a need. However, taking the child/youth to the doctor when they are sick is not the same as taking him/her for an EPSDT/ Well-Child examination.

If you have any questions about coverage for medical services including the EPSDT examination, please contact the Foster Care Medicaid Team at 1-800-547-3109.